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Man who sexually abused son sentenced to 14 years

ABUSE CASE: A 52-YEAR-OLD man who systematically sexually abused his young son for three years has been given a 14-year sentence by Mr Justice Barry White at the Central Criminal Court.

The now 20-year-old victim said he felt he now had a stigma attached to him, and described in his victim impact statement how he had never had a childhood. He said he had lived in fear, and described how he lay awake waiting for his father to come and abuse him.

The convicted man, who can not be named to protect the identity of his victim, was found guilty by a jury last month of 11 charges of anal rape; 12 charges of oral rape; and 24 charges of sexual assault of the boy on dates between April 11th, 2001, and June 2nd, 2004. The offences occurred while the victim was between 12 and 15 years of age.

In January 2009, the man's wife and the mother of their six children pleaded guilty to incest with another son, and to neglect of all the children. She was sentenced to seven years for incest.

Mr Justice White yesterday told the man that the consistent sexual abuse of his son was all the more reprehensible because he was the head of the family, and it was an appalling breach of the trust and innocence of a child.

He described the victim impact statement as poignant and said that while there were other matters regarding family life outlined in it "that would appal any right thinking person", these could not be visited upon the accused in relation to this case.

He said that while a life sentence would not necessarily be inappropriate, a determinate sentence was more satisfactory from the victim's and the accused's point of view. He imposed concurrent sentences totalling 14 years and suspended the final 18 months, taking into account the man's previous record. The court heard the convicted man had one previous conviction for a traffic offence.

Mr Justice White said the man had "shown no remorse, proffered no apology and was in denial as regards his offensive behaviour".

He said he did not believe post-release supervision was necessary.

The sentence was welcomed by the victim, who thanked all those involved in the case, singling out the jury, investigating garda John Hynes, the barristers, and neighbours and friends. "It was a difficult process for everyone," he said. "It's all over now. I can get on with my own life."

He added that he hoped the forthcoming HSE report on the background to the case "will help other children".

Members of the jury had returned to the court for the sentencing hearing last Monday and were in court again yesterday, and a number of them shook the victim's hand and embraced his aunt following the sentence.

Aileen Donnelly SC, prosecuting, had outlined to the court how the father began abusing his son when the child was 12 and would come into the bedroom the boy shared with his two brothers.

She said the boy was regularly sexually assaulted by his father during this time, and if he refused to co-operate he would be hit.

From September 2001 the boy was raped by his father until the time he left home in June 2004.

Ms Donnelly said the boy's mother had given evidence that she witnessed rapes, but did nothing to

stop it. She said “any semblance of parental propriety” was absent in the household.

David Goldberg SC, defending, said it had been “an immensely difficult case” for all involved and while “it might occur to some people there was some sort of psychiatric deficit” in the mind of the accused, a psychiatric assessment had revealed he did not suffer from “any psychosis or illness of the mind”.

Mr Goldberg said the accused continued to deny the offences. He urged the court not to engage in “vengeance or revenge”, and to impose a determinate sentence rather than a life sentence.

He asked Mr Justice White to show what leniency he could.